IN THE HIGH COURT OF GUJARAT AT AHMEDABAD

SPECIAL CIVIL APPLICATION No. 24146 of 2007

For Approval and Signature:

HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE D.H.WAGHELA Sd/-

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1 Whether Reporters of Local Papers may be allowed to see the judgment ?

2 To be referred to the Reporter or not ?

3 Whether their Lordships wish to see the fair copy of the judgment ?

4 Whether this case involves a substantial question of law as to the interpretation of the constitution of India, 1950 or any order made thereunder ?

5 Whether it is to be circulated to the civil judge ? **1 to 5 NO**

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SOMABHAI @ KAMLESH VAJESING GOHIL - Petitioner(s)
Versus
COMMISSIONER OF POLICE & 2 - Respondent(s)

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Appearance :
MS BANNA S DUTTA for Petitioner(s) : 1,
MR PATHIK ACHARYA ASSTT GOVERNMENT PLEADER for Respondent(s) :1-3.

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CORAM : HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE D.H.WAGHELA

Date : 23/10/2007

ORAL JUDGMENT :

1. By the present petition under Article 226 of the Constitution, petitioner has sought the relief of order dated 26.04.2007 of his detention being set aside. That impugned order dated 26.04.2007 is issued by Police Commissioner,

Surat in exercise of his powers conferred under the provisions of section 3 of the Gujarat Prevention of Anti-Social Activities Act, 1985 ("PASA" for short) on the basis that the petitioner was found to be repeatedly indulging in anti-social activity of bootlegging and an offence being III-C.R.No.5069 of 2007 under the Prohibition Act was registered on 19.03.2007 against the petitioner in D.C.B. Police Station of Surat in which 480 small bottles of liquor, each containing 180 ml., is stated to have been seized as muddamal. According to the grounds of detention supplied with the impugned order, even as the aforesaid offence was being investigated, other actions under the Prohibition Act were not possible and alcohol being injurious to health, there was likelihood of danger to public health on account of consumption of illicit liquor in which the petitioner was dealing. It is further stated that possibility of the petitioner continuing in anti-social activities could not be denied and hence it was found to be necessary to detain the petitioner after considering the documents and statements which were relied upon and supplied to the petitioner.

2. The present petition was admitted on 19.09.2007 and affidavit-in-reply of the detaining authority, executed on 20.10.2007, was

submitted to this court and copy thereof supplied to the petitioner on 22.10.2007 when the matter was taken up for final hearing. It is stated in that affidavit, *inter alia*, that *prima facie* involvement of the petitioner was established in the offence registered against him. It is further stated: "6. *....I say that the petitioner has been involved in the activity, under which the petitioner found dealing with foreign liquor, transporting it and carrying the business over an area of Surat City. As articles seized while investigating into the offences above, the petitioner found in possession with huge volume of liquor, which reveals the activity undertaken by petitioner. While prohibiting the activities, i.e. bootlegging, the officer concerned has proposed to detain on 12.4.2007 and came to be received by the respondent office on 12.4.2007. On receipt of the proposal above, the scrutiny has been made followed by the satisfaction arrived at, the detaining authority has passed its order dated 26.4.2007 and served upon the petitioner on 2.5.2007. Therefore, no delay worth any can be attributed to an order as the authority has applied its mind and on satisfying the material produced, the order came to be passed*".

3. In the above facts, it was sought to be argued on behalf of the respondents that danger to public health caused by the activity of bootlegging by the petitioner substantiated the assumption of likelihood of public order being adversely affected and, for that reason, the subjective satisfaction about the necessity of preventing the petitioner from acting in any manner prejudicial to the maintenance of public order and the impugned order directing his detention were legal and justified.

4. As held by this court in ***Amarbhai Kanjibhai Nayak v. Commissioner of Police, Ahmedabad City & Ors. [1993 (3) G.L.R. 2703]*** and in ***Sohanlal Surajaram Visnoi v. State of Gujarat [2004 (2) G.L.R. 1051]***, solitary incident of violation of prohibition law, normally, without anything more, would not be a problem to the maintenance of public order and, for such solitary incident, no person can be detained under the Act. It was also seen from analysis of the provisions of sub-section (4) of section 3 and the Explanation appended thereto that the presumption of likelihood of public order being adversely affected could arise, if danger were caused to life or public health, but such danger has to be grave or widespread for the mandatory presumption of likelihood of public order being

adversely affected. In the facts of the present case, nothing from the material on record could substantiate or justify the presumption of grave or widespread danger to life or public health and hence, the presumption of likelihood of public order being adversely affected could not have been legally availed by the detaining authority for the purpose of arriving at the subjective satisfaction.

5. Therefore, in the facts and circumstances, the impugned order dated 26.04.2007 of preventive detention is found and held to be unsustainable in law and set aside with the direction that the petitioner, Somabhai @ Kamlesh Vajesing Gohil, shall be set at liberty forthwith unless required to be detained in connection with any other case. Rule is made absolute accordingly. Direct service is permitted.

Sd/-
(D.H.Waghela, J.)

(KMG Thilake)